



# News Release

## UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

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### ROYAL AIR FORCE SHARES C-17 EXPERIENCES WITH CHARLESTON AFB

**CHARLESTON AIR FORCE BASE, S.C.** – After more than a year of experience flying the C-17, the Royal Air Force came to Charleston AFB for the first RAF/U.S Air Force Standardization and Evaluation Exchange Conference Sept. 17-19.

The purpose of the conference was for the RAF and the U.S. Air Force to share information and experiences, which they hoped would help both air forces fine-tune C-17 operations, according to Lt. Col. Steve Dellies, 437<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing chief of standardizations and evaluations.

“The goal for (RAF and U.S. Air Force) is to get the most out of our flying days,” said Dellies.

Ground and aircrews from No. 99 Squadron at RAF Brize Norton, Oxfordshire, England, received the last of four leased C-17s August 2001, and have been training at CAFB since September 2000.

According to Darrell Jacobs, No. 99 Squadron flight commander and senior leader for the RAF at the conference, Team Charleston has trained about 85 RAF members, and currently has 20 more here.

“Our ground and aircrews depend a great deal on the knowledge of the U.S. Air Force,” said Jacobs.

“We’re here to learn (C-17) systems and specs, the whole nine yards, and we have learned a fantastic amount already,” said Jacobs.

“The airplane is very complex, almost like a computer with wings,” continued Jacobs. “Our deep understanding (of the C-17) quite obviously comes from experience. Inevitably, there are things on the plane that you didn’t anticipate because the plane is still so new, but all the training we’ve had here has been quite useful.”

The RAF has used the C-17 to carry heavy loads in and out of smaller airfields in several missions in the past year, mostly supporting U.K. efforts in Afghanistan.

“It’s practically all we’ve been doing for the past year,” said Jacobs.

According to Dellies and Jacobs, the two air forces have a lot they can learn from each other, now, and in the future.

“We’ve learned a lot from the RAF,” said Dellies. “For example, the way they use their crews is drastically different than what we do. They use a non-duty loadmaster to supervise loading cargo on the plane.

“They’ve done some creative things,” continued Dellies. “We might find a way to implement some of these things.”

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The conference involved more than just meetings. Team Charleston also took the RAF out to do additional training while they were here.

"We're going to demonstrate the full capabilities of a C-17 and, hopefully, they'll be able to take away some techniques that may help them to utilize the plane in the RAF's mission," said Dellies.

The conference ended with training on the C-17 simulator and demonstrations in using night vision goggles during assault landings at North Auxiliary Air Field.

Landing at night without the aid of lights on either side of the runway is a challenging condition crews frequently face while in Afghanistan.

Until now, RAF crewmembers landed at airfields during the night by using a hand-held night vision device instead of NVGs.

The use of NVGs is relatively new and something the U.S. Air Force has only been doing for the past six months.

Six people from the No. 99 Squadron and three others from RAF higher headquarters attended the conference along with Boeing representatives and servicemembers from several Air Force bases from across the United States.

"Anyone involved with C-17 stan/eval, whether active duty or Reserve, had a representative here," said Dellies.

At the end of the conference, both air forces had to agree on one thing, according to Jacobs.

"The airplane is fantastic!"

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